

**FEAR OF LIGHT (Short Version)***Jim Mortimore*

“We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.”

*Plato*

**Prologue**

The attack came as they were unloading the ammo into the station entrance. Giant *things* with guns that sprayed suffocating web. Half the lads were down before anyone knew what was going on. Then the Colonel piled the rest back into the truck and told Evans to make a run for clear ground. Evans didn't need telling twice. His foot was on the pedal almost before the Colonel had stopped issuing orders. Now the thunder of rifle and small arms fire filled his head, while smoke and flame filled the empty streets.

Somewhere behind him, in the body of the truck, the men were shouting. Evans was barely aware of the sound, as a distant echo. Shock. That's what it was. He shouldn't even be here. Last minute replacement when Lennie, the shift driver, turned up with an embuggered ankle. In the front passenger seat of the truck, the Colonel had the window down and was firing double-handed as they moved. Behind the fogged glass, barely visible in the mist, were the *things*. The lads said they were robots. If so they were robots wearing bloody great fur coats. Whatever they were they were hideous and terrifying. They didn't fall when you shot them, and their strength was insane. In the first minute of the attack, Evans had seen just one of the things crush Private Barry's skull with its bare hands. Those same massively clawed hands, dripping gore, had immediately fastened around the throat of Corporal Grundy, virtually separating his head from his body in the time it took him to choke out a scream. And that was just one of the things. There seemed to be dozens of them in the mist.

“—left, Evans! Go—”

The Colonel's voice, a forceful shout, cut through the ringing sound filling his head. Evans swung the wheel one handed, changing gear and stamping on the accelerator.

“And stop bloody singing!”

“But it's Mary Hopkin, sir, it's my—”

“I'm out!” The Colonel's barked instruction nearly took off Evan's ear.

A rifle appeared from behind them. One of the soldiers was acting as reloader. The Colonel grabbed it and pointed it out of the window. A huge shape with glowing eyes wrenched it right out of his hands, twisted it into a pretzel and hurled it into the mist in a arc which would easily have taken it over a second storey rooftop.

The Colonel reeled back, barely escaping the same fate as the clawed hands reached in through the cab door without opening it first.

“Evans! Step on it!!

Evans needed no second urging. He shifted gear. The truck leapt forward and the grasping monster fell away. A moment later two more of the monsters appeared dead ahead, looming out of the mist, their glowing weapons spraying swathes of lethal web. Evans jerked the wheel and the truck swerved, hitting one creature dead on. The Colonel pushed open the passenger door of the cab and the second monster uttered a frustrated roar as the door tore both furry arm and strange weapon from its body.

“Now lad. Pedal to the metal!”

The truck plunged on, engine screaming, bonnet creased in a dramatic V-shape spewing oily smoke which added to the mist and drenched the windscreen in greasy fluid.

The Colonel reached across Evans, grabbed his sidearm from its holster, and shot out the windscreen. Now Evans could see but his face was lathered in muck from the bugged engine. The Colonel kept firing through the shattered windscreen but he barely had time to squeeze off three shots before still more of the monsters loomed out of the mist.

Evans changed down.

The truck screamed.

This time they weren't so lucky. The monsters must weigh tons, Evans thought, stupidly, as the multiple impact damn near shook the fillings from his teeth. The truck slewed sideways, wiping out a lamp-post before smashing through the wraparound glass window of a corner music shop. Evans shrieked as a rather decent Les Paul copy impaled itself neck first like a javelin through the remains of the windshield, stopping just inches from his face."

"Jesus, Mary and—"

—there was a tremendous *crash* as the truck smashed out of the—

"—watch out for the bloody—"

"—music shop? I think I saw it, foolish, now shut up and hang on before—"

—the truck, tyres shredded, slammed sideways into a brick wall, jammed there between the wall and a red painted postbox which, like everything in central London, was lathered with web.

"Out! Everyone out! Cover! *COVER!*"

Gunfire—

Screams—

Maddox, head crushed by—

Henry, face shot off by a ricochet—

Samuels, impaled on a railing, screaming for help as—

*Gone. All gone they're—*

*—comingchristonabikethey'recomingformeandthecolonelwherewas—*

*—grabbinghisarmtherewassomething—*

*—dragginhimfromthecaband—*

*—nonotlikethishecouldn'tdielike—*

*—EVANS WAKE UP MAN!! OUT OF THE CAB RIGHT NOW THAT'S AN—*

He tumbles from the cab

yanked upright by the

Colonel who shoves

a rifle and half

a dozen

clips

into into

his shaking

the truck *explodes*

consumed instantly in a ball of flame.

the mist burns away and the monsters so many  
are everywhere they're coming for coming to kill him and

–THE TUNELS MAN! FOLLOW ME INTO THE TUNNELS IF YOU WANT TO LIVE!–

1

Colonel Alistair Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart stared at the lifeless body of Colonel William Arthur Pemberton and wondered how time could steal so much from you, so damn quickly.

A few minutes before, he'd gently pulled back the cloth covering the Colonel's body. Since then he'd been unable to move. Doctor Travers had told him what to expect and he was able to keep his expression neutral. But he still *felt* the horror and sadness he was not able to show.

"So this... this is how he died. Eaten up from the inside."

Anne Travers touched him briefly on one arm. "You don't have to do this... we have his tags..."

Lethbridge-Stewart struggled to retain his composure. *His tags.*

"I first met him in Korea, you know, 1950. Wielding a bayonet and screaming bloody murder as the men crossed the Imjin River. His name was on MacArthur's lips for a week. They said..." he sighed heavily. "Never mind what they said. None of it matters now."

And it didn't. The man who saved his life not once but twice; the man to whose grandchildren he was godfather, that man was gone. Nothing left now but a cracked shell oozing scraps of web and the smell of preservative chemicals. Whatever the body was a vessel for, the mind, the soul, call it what you will, all that was gone, scooped out by the tool of an alien intelligence as easily as it had scooped out his organs, leaving nothing but bone and mummified skin.

Lethbridge-Stewart felt a cool hand on his own, was suddenly aware of how hard he was gripping the sheet, how badly his arm was shaking from tension. He let Doctor Travers hand guide his downwards, returning the sheet to its position, at the last minute leaving the face – what was left of it – exposed. He wanted to see it. To feel it. To know it. To hold it in mind so that when the mission was over and life returned to the streets of London he would never forget those whose sacrifice that had made it possible.

"What were the results of the—" his voice cracked. He began again. "What did you find out?"

Her voice was carefully neutral. "Cause of death was web infection. Method of infection, unclear from physical evidence. But this seems to be different from the other bodies we recovered. The infection seems to have begun inside, rather than outside. I can tell you the incursion of root matter into his brain indicates –"

"Yes, thank you, doctor, that's... extremely helpful."

"Oh, er, yes... of course. His personal effects are—"

"Yes. I picked them up earlier. There seemed to be one or two items missing. A pistol. His was monogrammed, a family heirloom. I should like to return it to his family. A tobacco tin. Old Holborn was his brand." He hesitated. *Was this it – the sum total of a man's life? A gun and some tobacco?* "Everything else seems in order, and consistent with field reports from Captain Knight."

*While the Captain was still alive.*

There was a long moment of silence.

"Can I get you any—"

"There's nothing left of him. Some skin and bone. I'm looking at him but there's nothing there. He was my friend, a husband, a father, a grandfather. What do we have to remember him by? What were his last thoughts? Was he frightened? Angry? He never left a job unfinished in his life."

"The job isn't unfinished, Colonel. You finished it for him."

"Did I really? The Intelligence has gone – but will it return? Is London really safe? Where did those blasted Yeti things go? We haven't found a single one, remember."

"Life holds no guarantees, Colonel."

*Her hands, holding a scalpel, a bone saw. Peeling back layers of skin and fat, chopping away ribs to expose his organs, removing the top of his skull to examine his brain.*

"There's nothing here. You have your organs, your flesh, your *mortal coil*. I want something too. Something of him. Something meaningful. Inarguable." His voice was suddenly harsh. "You had

your pound of flesh, doctor. Now I want mine!”

Her hand, still lightly touching his arm, fell away.

“Then... there's something you should see.”

It lay on a desk in a glass walled laboratory, a translucent pyramid filled with a spongy substance made of what looked like thousands of faintly glowing glass filaments. The pyramid had the appearance of fractured crystal, incomplete, though its general shape was intact. Irregular lumps appeared to be missing, and one side displayed damage consistent with close-range rifle fire. Cardio-vascular monitors had been attached to various points on the surface of the pyramid, and these in turn were connected to a dense tangle of recording equipment. Cables from the equipment led to monitoring stations outside the room, where more than a dozen personnel hovered, meticulously proprocessing the raw data for analysis.

“Is that...?”

Anne nodded. “It's the pyramid Evans and Jamie destroyed at Monument station. One of many we now believe were used by the Intelligence to generate and direct the web. We collected the pieces and have been attempting to reassemble them.”

“Successfully it seems. Is it safe?”

“If you mean is it active, yes it is, partially anyway. If you mean, is its activity *directed* then, no, we don't think so. At least, there's no sign of that. The Intelligence has withdrawn from this plane. The assumption is that any connection to its tools has been severed.”

“Assumption?”

“One we're testing.”

“Carefully, I hope.”

Anne exhaled softly. “You do go right to the hard questions.”

“It's my job. Partially re-activated alien technology is ground I seem to remember covering at length only very recently.”

“*Touche*, Colonel.”

She waited but he made no further comment, merely moved warily around the object, looking at it from all sides. The milky glow from within lent a haunted look to his face, she thought. Or maybe the look was due to other events. The deaths of so many men under his command.

“It seems active. What's it doing?”

“I'll show you.”

Anne crossed the room to a workstation, stepping around a tie-dye bean bag chair to do so. The station comprised a wooden desk and swivel chair which had been transformed by swathes of equipment from somewhat common-place items of office furniture into something resembling the set of a Hollywood B-movie. A teetering bank of oscilloscopes, duck-taped together, rose from the desk. Highly complex, constantly evolving waveforms scrolled endlessly across every screen.

“The screens measure data in orders of magnitude,” she explained. “One bit per second, one kilobit, one meg, one gig, one terabyte per second, ten terabytes, one hundred, one thousand, one million, and so on.”

He scanned the rows and columns of flickering scopes, silently doing the math.

“And this data is...?”

“This data is what it's *remembering*.”

Anne indicated the pyramid. Spun-glass filaments lay exposed through the bullet holes. Anne shuddered. Every time she looked at the angular construction she was reminded of a patient undergoing brain surgery. The skull removed, the brain exposed. Somewhere in that eight pounds of grey porridge lay the human soul. Did the Great Intelligence also have a soul? Was it here, right now, in this skull of broken glass?

“That stuff inside the pyramid. It's web-fungus. The same stuff that...”

... *killed my friend and all those soldiers*. Anne finished the Colonel's sentence without speaking. She tried to imagine what he was feeling, then found she didn't need to. Some of those soldiers had been her friends too.

As much to deflect her own feelings as his, she said, "We've discovered it's not really fungus at all. Think of it as a biological storage matrix."

"To store what?"

"The living memories of everyone who was ever killed by or otherwise absorbed into the web."

He stood up a little straighter. It was a habit he had, she'd noticed, a method of displacing his discomfort.

"And how does it do that?"

"We think the web is an organic neural-net which uses fuzzy cognitive mapping to store and process experiential data in a manner analagous to human memory."

The Colonel waited. Pretty calmly, she thought, under the circumstances.

"The Intelligence was building a physical repository for its own mind."

"A... brain?"

She watched the Colonel try to visualise the kind of entity which might use a living brain large enough to fill the London Underground... as nothing more or less than a simple *tool*.

"If you like."

The Colonel became very still for a moment.

"Is it a threat?"

"That's something we can only determine with further experimentation."

"What experiment?"

"We want to connect it to a human mind."

The Colonel shook his head firmly. "Absolutely not. Out of the question. Far too dangerous."

"Colonel, you're wrong. What we have here is a keystone discovery. We must exploit it, if we hope to determine the Great Intelligence's full motivations in coming to Earth."

The Colonel glanced from Anne to the pyramid and back again. She felt the keen intellect behind that gaze struggling to find a way to the truth.

"How would you even do that?"

"Just touching active web will do the job. The web makes a connection with the human nervous system. That's what it's designed to do."

He sighed. "I can't order anyone to connect their mind to... *that*."

"You won't need to." Anne took a deep breath, then slowly let it out. "To produce effective results this experiment requires the best subject available. Whoever we connect to the web has to have immense personal discipline and emotional stability. They must be highly observant. Able to react flexibly but with extreme speed. They must be imaginative and pragmatic, able to act on their own recognizance if cut off from the chain of command, able to determine their own mission parameters, modify them if necessary, be fully responsive to events those changes may reveal, yet not be overwhelmed by them."

He nodded. "In short, a soldier."

"Not just any soldier. The *cream* of soldiery. The very best we have. In point of fact, Colonel, I'm describing you. In my opinion you are the only man qualified for the job."

The Colonel considered. "If I connect my mind to the web without authorisation I could be court-martialed."

"Colonel, I'm not going to lie to you. If you agree to participate in this experiment a court martial will probably be the least of your worries. The conjoining of human and alien neural sub-systems into a common fuzzy cognitive map... with the intention of retrieving and retaining meaningful data... the outcome could be anything. Literally anything. From schizophrenia to psychosis... psychopathy... even death. Or nothing at all. We simply have no way of knowing before it happens, and no way of reversing any change that does occur after it happens. But... think of what we might learn."

"The motivation and strategy of the enemy, I understand that. But—"

"That's not what I meant," her voice was a whisper. He reacted to it as if it was a shout. "You wanted something... a keepsake... of your friend..." Anne pointed to the web inside the pyramid.

“There's a very good chance every memory he ever had... is in there.”

The Colonel's clouded expression finally cleared.

“Well then,” he said briskly.

He reached out to the pyramid and pressed his hand against the exposed

## 2

Joy.

Hate.

Fear.

Shame.

Anger.

Kindness.

Cruelty.

Regret.

Pity.

Envy.

Love.

*Nightmare.*

A spectrum of death and every colour black.

A carousel ride and every painted pony smile grinning bone.

A death-ride and no way to pay the ferryman.

No way off the wheel, no *sir!*

No way off so

he screamed without voice, alone in the void of all. His mind, cloudstorm, shuddershriek, universe of

*(fear of)*

light split the

*(windscreen spraying )*

“—is this shit it's—”

“—everywhere it's all over the—”

“—can't see where's the hell's the bloody—”

truck slewed, left to right, tore down a concrete lamp-post, smashed through the plate glass window of a corner music shop, emerged from the second window shedding amps and mixers, sheet music and smashed guitars.

“—watch out for the bloody—”

“—music shop? I think I saw it, foolish, now shut up and hang on before—”

the truck, tyres shredded, slammed sideways into a brick wall, jammed there between the wall and a red painted postbox which, like everything in central London, was lathered with web.

“Out! Everyone out! Cover! *COVER!*”

He moved, head ringing like some monstrous church bell, out, down, ammo, yes, rifle, yes, grenades, absomutherfuckinlutely.

*They were waiting.*

Implacable. Unstoppable. Merciless.

Private (*colonel Alistair gordon lethbridge*) Paul Jeremy (*lethbridge-stewart*) Maddox made







“—steady lads I'll have to give him a tracheotomy if we want to save—”  
*your strength captain no way back for me save the men get them out just*  
 “Hobson don't just stand there like a bloody lemon give me the bloody kit, damn you!”

Hobson.

*(Hobson and) Hobbsy and Dougie and*  
*all the kings horses and all the kings*

“—we're losing him we're not—”

*losing him like this, dammit, he's my friend, I was godfather to his grandchildren, he saved my*  
*life in Korea, he can't go not like this not Pemberton not screaming with no voice like this it's*  
*inhuman its*

hobbsy and dougie and ali and  
 hobbsy always  
 hob all  
 way

“—too slow what the hell is he—”  
 “—gun, he's trying to get his bloody—”  
 “—reaching for his pistol, sir, he's going to—”

*no no no no nonononot like*

“—stop gawping like a schoolgirl and grab the bloody gun before he... *Hobson!*”

*takes the monogrammed pistol chased silver from the dying colonel's convulsing*

suddenly it just *(convulsing just)*

stopped.

Breath. Gone.

Heart still. Skin cold.

Eyes, cracked glaze, windows to a soul lost in web.

“Captain Knight, sir. You can stop now. I think he's...

gone

memory

flowing black like paint itpaint

itblack paintitblackpaintitgrinboneblackbonenonotblacknot

*that again i can't not again i christonabike not that*

abyssal

*HEADSPLASH!*

*And his*

mind gone to stardust, heavy atoms,

back to the garden baby, oh yeah, hope you guess my

*nameisgod(me)itsgod(helpme)its GODVOID and the abyss is doing its thing to*

*space, time and alistair*

*gordon lethbridge*

*william arthur*

*stewart*

*pemberton*

*stewart*

*pemberton moved into the tunnel, boots crunching softly on a hundred years of fallen muck filling the space between (his head between) the dead rails, rifle at the ready. Somewhere up there was the enemy. No-one knew what it was or what it wanted. They only knew what it was doing. Emptying London of people and filling the space up with itself, smoke and mirrors, shadows and*

death came on charcoal wings

drifting mothspores in the space between

*(trawets-egdirbhtel)*

light and shadow

reason and memory

*(saw eh raitsila alistair he was)*

Christ i need a smoke. Just one, and

alistair gordon lethbridge-stewart and he would not be destroyed by this vision of

*(william arthur)*

vision of

*(pemberton)*

of

Old Holborn in a battered

Here you are, sir, take mine.

Hobson you're a lifesaver.

It's nothing sir.

God help me, Hobson, if Mrs Pemberton could see me like this, smoking a rollup she'd throw a complete and utter conniption fit.

Just as well she's safe at home then, sir, I'd say.

I'd say you're right on the money, there

*Hobson.*

*Old Holborn.*

*Hobson was there at*

*Holborn Underground Station.*

*Ammo gone. Truck crushed. Men dead. Map lost. Map lost. Map*

*was glowing as if in response to his death, the pulsing web erupting from his body, mirror to the map, filling him as it filled the tunnels, tearing him open and the pain how could it be so bad how could it be so bad and he not be*

*so bad and he not be*

*bad and he not*

*be not*

( )

### 3

The GPO Tower rose above a darkened skyline. Far away in the distance, the lights of South London shimmered, a false dawn in the moon-shot night. Closer, the streets of North London were still being bulldozed clear of acres of thick gray dust, the last remnant of an alien presence whose full motivation was still only partially clear. 618 feet above the streets, in the Tower Restaurant, now transformed into billets and workspace for the officers and scientists of the elite taskforce which he commanded, Lethbridge-Stewart stood in silence, regarding the dark night and darker streets with an unflinching gaze. Like stars, the isolated worklights and torches of soldiers and workmen only served to accentuate the darkness. Lethbridge-Stewart wondered what other dangers still lay hidden there, what fear lived in the shadows between the light.

The reflection of a woman's face appeared beside his, framed in the curved window glass, mapped faintly across the darkened buildings.

"Look at us." Anne Travers. Her voice, smooth as fresh snow. "We're like ghosts haunting a dead city."

"London isn't dead, Miss Travers. Just sleeping. She'll wake soon enough."

Anne took a step nearer the glass. Her face slipped into shadow, the reflection shifting his focus from the city to the crescent of light burnishing the edge of her cheek. She put her hand, palm out, to the glass, partially obscuring the view.

"I spoke to General Hamilton today. He's not a happy bunny."

Lethbridge-Stewart resisted a brief urge to chuckle at her description of his commanding officer. "General Hamilton likes his staff to be... of a uniform mind."

"So I gather. Moving the Lab and all the artifacts we've collected "to a more secure location" seems to be some kind of punishment for my risking your life."

"The life of a soldier is universal currency, Miss Travers. The General is annoyed because your experiment risked the chain of command. But he's not angry at you. He's angry at me. Moving the artifacts closer to GHQ is purely political – his way of retaining control. Of them and us, since you'll be going with them and I won't."

In the glass, her reflection tensed. "You're being reassigned?"

"It's really not your fault."

Anne shrugged helplessly. "You know I honestly don't understand how you can take orders from someone so magnificently uninformed."

Lethbridge-Stewart was unable to repress a chuckle. "Funny. The General said the same thing to me about you only this evening – while he was throwing the book at me for "unnecessarily" delaying the repopulation of London."

"Really?" Anne sighed. "I'm sorry about that. Did I get you into awful hot water?"

Lethbridge-Stewart recalled the tone of the General's language – and flinched. "Yes, well... it's a very heavy book, Miss Travers. And the General delivers a formidable beamer."

"Somehow that doesn't surprise me." Anne moved to a nearby desk. She sat, a slim figure almost perfectly matched to the three-quarter-sized desk, cradling her chin on one hand and idly tracing schoolboy graffiti with the other. "I know I wasn't the first adviser General Hamilton approached for this job."

"Quite." Lethbridge-Stewart's eyes narrowed. "I understand Professor Sagan was top of the list."

"Carl and I are old friends. He recommended me when he turned you down."

"You know the Professor?"

Anne chuckled. "He invited me to join him at SETI last year. I told him I didn't believe in little green men. Can you imagine the irony?"

Lethbridge-Stewart turned back to the window to hide a smile.

"I knew him before that of course. From Stanford. "If you think LSD messes with your mind try quantum mechanics." But we first met at the 1939 World Fair."

Lethbridge-Stewart blinked. "1939? And you were. . . how old?"

"Two. He was six. He seemed like a nice boy. We stayed in touch."

Lethbridge-Stewart composed his expression and turned back into the room. "I never know, from one minute to the next, whether to believe you or not."

Anne looked up from the desk, and he was surprised by the warmth in her eyes. "Gautama Buddha says there are three things that cannot be hidden: The Moon, the Sun and the Truth."

"Yes, well, it's not the moon and the sun I have issues with." Lethbridge-Stewart straightened his back by an imperceptible fraction of an inch. "Doctor Travers, if nineteen years of military service have taught me anything, it's the value of patience. On the other hand, the events of the last few hours have taught me one can never allow complacency to rule the roost. I assume you've analysed the results from today's experiment?"

Quite suddenly the light tone was gone from her voice.

"It filled in lot of gaps in our knowledge-base."

"And?"

"Since the cleanup began the bulldozer crews have shifted more than 4000 tons of grey dust, which until now was presumed to have precipitated from the Mist cloaking inner London prior to the incursion into the London Underground."

"That's a number I'm intimately familiar with. With certain recent exceptions, I've spent the last four days justifying the cost of hiring and supplying the civilian contractors. And I can tell you now the General is far from happy about it."

Anne rose from the desk, her face creased in anger. "Why is it that counting the cost in sterling always seems easier for you people than counting it in human life?"

"We're all responsible to the body politic, Doctor. But some of us can't afford the luxury of remorse."

She turned away. "That's so cold."

Lethbridge-Stewart bit back a sharp retort. Separation. That was the thing. Stand apart from their hurt, even as you were protecting them. They didn't have to love you, or even understand. They only had to *live*.

As so many under his command had not.

"Well, then, Colonel," She continued. "Here are some more numbers for you. Nine days ago, at the start of the crisis, the population of inner London was over 3,200,000 people. Government census taken during the evacuation and in the last three days estimates that figure has been reduced by more than seventy percent. Subtracting evacuees leaves nearly a million and a half people

unaccounted for. Now how much do you suppose a million and a half a million people weigh?"

"Assuming an average weight of 8 stones per person, the combined weight of 1,500,000 people adds up to 9375 tons." Lethbridge-Stewart allowed himself a momentary satisfaction at her surprised glance. "When I was a lad I always wanted to be a math teacher." The satisfaction faded quickly. "So what are you saying? That we found the missing people? They're the dust we've been bulldozing into skips and burning?"

"Not all of them." Was that a catch in her voice? "We also shifted more than 6000 tons of web-fungus from the London Underground."

*... Pemberton, falling, web pouring from his mouth and nose and ears... fear and fury barely visible in his web-haunted eyes... unvoiced final command locked in his chest as it swelled and split...*

*... grey-wreathed fingers... reaching for his holster... the monogrammed pistol... his intention all too clear...*

*... Hobson... taking the weapon from his grasp...*

"Fungus has to grow on something."

Quite suddenly, the jury-rigged worklights posted beside the school desks all around the circular restaurant seemed to burn with a painful brilliance, dispelling the visible gloom but only accentuating the dark thoughts filling his mind. Lethbridge-Stewart felt an overwhelming tiredness flood through his body. Only this morning he had been looking forward to extending his time working with the Traverses. They seemed like people he could come to respect – perhaps even call friends. But all he wanted now was for this conversation to be over.

"Is that it?"

Anne held his gaze for a long moment. He had the feeling she had more to say – much more. She sighed and looked away.

"Yes, Colonel. That's it. You'll have the full report first thing in the morning. I just wanted to say... you were right. And... thank you. For risking your life. And... I'm sorry I got you into trouble."

There was a long moment of silence.

*Pemberton. Knight. Arnold. Lane. Blake. Weams. Two dozen other souls, names he would never forget. Dead faces, haunted by web, burned unfading into memory.*

*Hobson. Planting scraps of web in Pemberton's tobacco tin.*

*Infecting it. Infecting Pemberton. Killing him.*

With a supreme effort Lethbridge-Stewart forced the memory aside. Hobson could wait. Let him think he got away with murder. Time would prove him wrong. For now there were more important things to deal with.

"You know, Doctor, this incursion has cost London secure trade protection schemes and halved trade with commonwealth countries. St Katherine's Docks at Wapping have shut and I'm told there are no plans to re-open them because they're being moved downriver, outside the affected areas of central London." Lethbridge-Stewart bit his lip hard enough to draw blood. "Hundreds of thousands of jobs, burned away like morning fog. Unemployment is going to become a cancer that may very well kill us. To say the position of Great Britain on the world stage is no longer what it was is like Noah saying he had a spot of rain!" He took a breath, reaching for calm but falling woefully short. "I've failed in my duty of care, Miss Travers. Yes, your experiment proved the Intelligence has withdrawn from London. But only time will tell if it dealt us a mortal blow before leaving. And that's without considering it could return. That perhaps it already has... somewhere down there... in the dark."

There was a pressure in his chest, a fist squeezing his heart that made him want to scream.

"And Parliament want us – you and me – to tell everyone it's safe to bring the people back."

She took a step forward, closing the distance between them. He was surprised when she put her hand on his arm, more surprised still when he realised her touch had stopped him shaking.

"You didn't fail, Colonel. *We* didn't fail. You mustn't think that."

"But we didn't succeed either."

Her grip tightened, an attempt to comfort.

"They said the same thing after the Great War, you know. Both wars, actually. How can we know it's safe to rebuild; to mourn, remarry, have children; safe to live without fear? It's true the world is changing – and quickly. But so quickly we can allow ourselves to think we have a right to live without fear? I don't think so." She hesitated for a moment, and he could see she was giving serious thought to what she would say next. "Partial victory is still a victory. Maybe in this new world it's all we have a right to hope for."

"Lethbridge-Stewart uttered a short, humourless laugh. "All the king's horses and all the king's men, is that it?" Lethbridge-Stewart moved away, her arm falling from his as he strode back towards the elevator. Normally he'd have departed the restaurant as he'd arrived, by the stairs. But right now time to think was one thing he didn't need. He already knew what he was going to do next.

At the door to the stairwell he turned, sought her gaze, held it unflinchingly. The cold fist in his chest was gone; her touch had dispelled that at least, but the darkness remained. A darkness only action could dispell. His words, blunt as any cosh, were a promise of things to come.

"Miss Travers, I *hope* for greater things than that. And by *god* I intend to get them."

### Epilogue

Private Gwynfor Evans struggled to lift the last crate into the back of the truck. Typical that they'd leave him to sort the loading of the last of the equipment from the dishy doctor's lab on his own. Typical that they'd leave his truck 'til last. Still maybe it was just as well. He still wasn't entirely sure how things lay at the moment. Maybe he was better off out of it. Load the truck, sign for the orders and a nice little drive out of London. That was the ticket. He didn't really care where. If he never saw an underground tunnel or any of the things they reminded him of again it would be too soon.

Evans' boot slipped suddenly on a patch of oil. His grip slipped and the crate began to tip.

Bugger it!

He scrambled for the crate. No good. It was going over and they'd have his hide for a–

"Let me help you with that."

A pair of strong arms grabbed the crate and together they set it upright and shoved it into the back of the truck. Evans strapped the crate in place then looked around. His helper was a dapper man, short, with a neutral face wearing army browns.

"They'd've had my guts for garters if that'd come a cropper." Evans wondered whether to salute. There didn't seem to be any rank insignia on the man's sleeve. "So thanks..."

"Just call me Hobson. Or Hob'll do."

Evans nodded. "Thanks Hob. I owe you."

Hobson leaned casually against the side of the truck "Evans, right? I've heard some things about you."

*Oh great.*

"Yes well, that lot, they don't understand me. Evans jerked a thumb towards the elevator connecting the basement with the main building. "They think I'm a coward. I'm not a coward, see? I'm a pragmatist. A proponent of the church of enlightened self-interest, that's me. There's a difference, look, a quantifiable difference. A man like the Colonel, a smart man like that, he should know not to confuse the one with the other."

Hobson waved away Evans words with a friendly grin. "I don't care what they think."

"You don't?"

"I only care what they do." Funny how Hobson's friendly grin didn't quite reach his eyes. 的 care what everyone does. It's my job. Take you for example."

"Me?"

"Private Gwynfor Evans. Driver with the 33rd Engineers. Born in the Valleys. Dad was an

undertaker. And a drunk. Mum... well, we don't know much about her do we? For reasons we won't go into."

"Now look here boyo if it's a kicking you're after—"

"Just as we won't go into the reasons he joined up. But we are quite interested in what he did after. After the attack on the ammo truck. In the tunnels."

Evans felt sweat break out on his face.

"What the hell do you know about—"

"In the dark. Alone. And the fear pulling him down like a ship's anchor. We're very interested in what he did there... before rejoining the Colonel and his men... so much so that we checked the ammunition logs. And guess what we discovered?"

Evans felt like he was about to throw up.

"That's right. One whole clip unaccounted for. This clip, as a matter of fact."

Hobson took a rifle ammo clip from his pocket, tapped it gently against the side of the truck.

"Now why would someone throw away a perfectly good ammo clip with only one missing round?"

Evans fell backwards against the tailgate of then truck. The sharp edge cut into his back but he barely noticed.

*The shape. In the tunnels. The shadow. Coming for him.*

"I thought... I thought it was one of them Yeti things. Coming for me. Like they did at the truck."

"But it wasn't a Yeti, was it?"

"I don't know! I don't know what it was!"

*But he did. He did know because*

"I just ran didn't I? Terrified, I was. You would have been too!"

"Well, you're right about that. I would have been terrified. But I would have felt guilty too. I might have stopped running and gone back to see what I could see... I might have found that it wasn't a Yeti I'd shot... it was one of the soldier boys I'd been sent there to help..."

"There was nothing... *nothing* I could do for him, see? He was a goner. He was already covered in that web-stuff. I couldn't even see his face, or anything!"

"So you ran."

Evans felt a crushing weight in his chest, a terrible heat washing over his face.

"I'm not a bloody coward!"

Hobson nodded, thoughtfully.

"If you were I would already have submitted my report... and the evidence... I know I don't need to tell you where that road leads."

*Court Martial. Imprisonment. Summary Execution.*

"No, sir."

"Just Hob, Private." Another almost friendly smile. "Just Hob."

"No, Hob, you don't... but then... what..."

"What do I want? Just a favour. Something small... say... one or two of these crates to go missing *en route*."

Evans gulped, struggled to get his nerves under control.

Hobson said, quietly, "'A proponent of the church of enlightened self-interest.'"

Evans nodded dumbly.

"Then it's settled. I've marked the crates in question. You'll find new transfer orders in the cab. Destroy the old ones. Burn them when you're out of London."

"Alright. And... that will be the end of it?"

"Of course it will. I'm not a greedy man Evans. One mistake, one atonement, it all balances."

Evans pinched his nose, wiped the back of his hand across his eyes.

He scratched his head.

"Alright. One favour. Agreed."

“Excellent. Shall we seal the deal?” Hobson took out an Old Holborn tobacco tin. “Rollup?  
Evans felt his face crease in a sickly smile.  
“As a matter of fact, I don't mind if I do.”

Pleased to meet you, hope you guess my name  
But what's puzzling you, is the nature of my game  
*The Rolling Stones*  
*Sympathy for the Devil*

*Jim Mortimore, Jan 2015*  
*(7200 words approx)*

**The End**



**LETHBRIDGE-STEWART NOVEL CANCELLED BLOG**

Well, perhaps unsurprisingly, after several weeks work, Candy Jar editor Andy Frankham-Allen has decided I am "too inflexible" to work with. This after approving a novel proposal, and asking me to write an introductory short story for the series. For anyone who's interested, the full story lies below, along with the rejected intro story *Fear Of Light*.

After responding to AFA's call for writers, I was invited to pitch a novel in the Lethbridge-Stewart range. I did so and the pitch was approved, subject to development. While developing the novel I wrote some series notes for the lead character of Anne Travers, and, at Andy's request, gave Candy Jar permission to use a character I had created from Blood Heat (Hobson) and created notes for him which allowed his use as a series villain. These notes were submitted for approval to Andy, and were included in the series writers guides and sent to other series writers without my permission, or offer of credit or payment. While this was happening Andy also invited me to write an (unpaid) 2000 word free digital short intro story for the series, to be published this January. I asked for a payment, which was agreed, then submitted and subsequently developed an outline which was approved, and then wrote the story, which came in long (7200 words). (Length is irrelevant for a digital short.) Andy asked for a small section of this story to be rewritten in a Terrance Dicks style house-style". Since the scene had been pitched and approved as a somewhat obscure "hallucinogenic experience of many hundreds of dying memories" which alluded to series continuity then in development, I didn't see how this was possible. I was also not prepared to change my writing style in this case, though I was happy to make any other changes and said so on three occasions. After hearing nothing from Andy for a week, the story and all my involvement with the series was rejected, and my "inflexibility" was cited as the cause.

Andy's mail and my response are below. After that you can read the character notes I created and intro story *Fear of Light*, as it was submitted.

ANDY to JIM

Hey, Jim.

After long discussions with Shaun, we've decided that we are unable to continue working with you.

The reasons for this is that even though we adjusted our plans to indulge your extensive over-writing twice (first when the asked for 2000 word short story was coming in at over 10k, we agreed to release it in print as a novella AND a free shorter version of up to 3000 words. Second, when the short was delivered it came in at over 7,4000 words. Both times we were willing to accept these over-writes), when asked to adjust your more experimental writing style to meet the more readable style of the Lethbridge-Stewart range you refused, for whatever reasons, to do so.

We cannot work with such inflexibility. We believe it is part of an author's job to meet the needs of the publisher and property (including house style), which by your own admission you are unwilling to do.

We agree that we will not use any material developed by you, including the Hobson arc and the notes written (on your own back, I should point out, although again as they were good ideas we were more than willing to adjust our plans to incorporate them) for Anne Travers.

We thank you for your enthusiasm, and wish you the best of luck with your own writing.

Thanks for your time, and hope things work out well in the future with your own original material.

JIM to ANDY

Fair enough. I'm not surprised. Inflexibility seems to be the key publishing issue these days. I would however be interested in addressing your tone. Your email suggests I have done lots of things "wrong." At all stages the synopses for work were approved by you and discussed with you and Shaun, so I really don't think that's fair. Also - the length of a free digital short is irrelevant, since it has no paper print cost. Also... when you asked for a character from my work you could use I gave you one (Hobson), and helped you create an arc for that character as a series villain. I also developed a more extensive backstory for AT which, when I submitted it for your information as part of the development process for the novel, was included in the series writers' guides (along with my notes on Hobson) and sent to all other authors without my permission, or a credit, or offer of payment. All this over and above the fact that Candy Jar asked me to write a story for free and then planned to include it in a printed book by another author without payment or addressing the issue of royalties accruing to the book's author and not to me.

On all these issues I'm very disappointed with the level of professional behaviour and consideration from you and Candy Jar. Would you care to comment?

All the best-  
Jim

ANDY to JIM

Hi, Jim.

No I do not wish to comment. I will not be dragged into a continuous 'war of words' ala your still ongoing issue re: Campaign and the BBC.

I thank you for your time.

Good luck in the future.

**Here's the conversation thread detailing the proposed changes to the story:**

ANDY to JIM

Hey, Jim.

Sorry it's a bit late, but had a long weekend. Anyway...

Read the short. I like it, but it does have a pretty major problem which needs to be fixed,

which I shall explain shortly. But first the good stuff.

Other than section two, I think it's all very good. Well told as expected, nailed LS and Anne, and really feels like the next episode of Web.

However, section two is a big problem. And it may be partly my fault for not communicating our need and objectives correctly. I have previously stated we're looking to recapture the feel of the Virgin days, which may have been misinterpreted a little. By saying that I mean the layered plots, the layered characters, the strong prose style. We're aiming for the mature fifteen year old, but as Doctor Who appeals to a much wider audience these days, and is not the cult favourite of the '90s, our books need to be written with the understanding that a ten year old could very well pick up a copy, and so the books need to be written with our house style in mind (see *Forgotten Son* for examples of that). The emphasis is on traditional, the Terrance Dicks school of prose. We can't have experimental arty passages that will almost certainly take the younger reads out of the story.

With all this in mind, section two needs a heavy rewrite so the prose matches the rest of the book. A strong, straightforward narrative. It needs to focus on LS learning about Pemberton's death, with you telling us about how LS can feel the echoes of other thoughts and minds. Abstract is fine as long as it's told in a strong, straightforward style. At the moment it takes me out of the story, and I like to read heady stuff.

I'm sorry if you feel we're constricting your creativity here, but this is the style this series is using and it needs to follow throughout the series. Especially with this intro short. It's a freebie to entice readers to pick up the series, so it needs to match the style of the series.

But like I said, the rest of it is great. Reads in a nice strong manner (a few edits, etc, needed, although I fixed typos and the minor stuff already), and feels much like the rest of the series so far.

Again, apologies if you're feeling we're constricting you, or that I'm talking down to you here. I'm just trying to make sure you're on the same page as us to make the whole experience more enjoyable and smooth for all of us, including yourself.

JIM to ANDY

Hey Andy-

OK, I was afraid this might happen. It's a conversation I have had with Justin over Campaign and more other stories than I can count. It didn't go well there, and you can reference all the emails in Campaign to see why. However I will say this, as I have always done (immediately before a project was cancelled):

I am very happy to do any edits to Fol in terms of story/character/continuity/etc. ... but...

I hope you understand when I say I worked very hard to get that story in the best shape it can be in. House styles are provably (PDE proved it for Virgin) not relevant to a series which will only be bought by a predetermined readership - such as this one - and anyway, it's not like I took LSD and went nuts. Dramatising the memories as full prose (ie: 1.2-2k

per plot point and there are four in that section), could double the length of the story. Before starting to develop the plot into prose we discussed and you agreed that the memory sections could be necessarily unclear. If you put them into straight prose they won't be. And that will have a significant impact on how much plot is revealed and how much continuity the series is locked to. Or you'd have to take them out and there'd be no story to write.

Also - and this really is the kicker for me - I appreciate that it might perhaps be unrepresentative of other author's work but it certainly will not be unrepresentative of mine. I don't write for money these days because no publisher wants to take any financial risks. Because they won't (and it's their flipping job to) the author has to assume the financial risk. Well. It's not fair but I can't do much about it. Except write what I love to write, what my heart and mind are invested in, and what more than two decades as a professional writer and editor has taught me works. Which is what I'm doing with ALS. If all you want is "house style," I'd understand your need, but I wouldn't have wanted to get involved even if reasonable financial terms were being offered.

To sum up: the prose in FoL style is perfectly legitimate; it tells the story effectively; people that are interested in me as a Dr Who writer are familiar with it because of Campaign and other things (and Campaign has been selling consistently for more than 14 years).

Bottom line: what you have in FoL is my authorial voice. It's a voice I've grown into over twenty years and I'm very proud of it. I'm not changing it. Nor is it really fair of anyone to ask to ask.

Hope you understand. :o)  
J

ANDY to JIM

Hey, Jim.

I can understand what you're saying. Let me discuss with Shaun, and see if the three of us can work a middle ground where we'll all be happy. :)

JIM to ANDY

coolio!

ANDY to JIM

Hey, Jim.

Find attached a mostly edited version of your story (few bits unchanged, as I need you to do a few small rewrites and edits). I've discussed this a lot with Shaun today, and we've decided that the way this had been edited is as far as we're willing to go in terms of your style. We obviously want it to be Jim Mortimore, but at the same time we need to consider

the broader appeal, and I get the sense you may be missing the broader appeal and reach of Who these days. There are many readers of the current books who will not know Jim Mortimore, and this series is going to bring others to your books (both new and those that are much harder to get). In light of that, I've removed the odd bit here and there, and edited it into a more visually accessible look, so it's a mid way between the LS house style and the Mortimore style.

I sincerely hope you're willing to compromise on this. :)

JIM to ANDY

Andy, an edit "to bring something in line with a house style" is never a good thing. It's one of the things Justin threatened on Campaign and I don't support it as a meaningful or reasonable editor-writer relationship. Like I said, I'll make any reasonable changes myself happily, but this - no. I do not agree. I hope you understand.

J

... actually, there's one other thing I wanted to say... you say... "we need to consider the broader appeal, and I get the sense you may be missing the broader appeal and reach of Who these days." - well... any edit that brings a piece closer to a "house" style (particularly such an old, conservative model, if you'll pardon me being blunt) can only narrow the audience appeal. By definition. If you plan to appeal to a new-who audience why explicitly exclude snogging and overtly soapy pansexuality? If the BBC thinks it works for a fifteen-ish audience...?

The style I use has precedents which go back through writers such as Cornell Woolrich (crime) and Ray Bradbury - to the forties. It's why people like my stuff. If you want Jim Mortimore this is what you get. I'll happily make any reasonable edit, like I said, but I'm not changing my style. And I don't give permission for anyone else to change it either.

That's my position and that's where we move forward from. Or we don't. Which I guess is up to you.

J

## CHARACTER NOTES

### Anne Travers (bio)

*As she appears in Feralia by Jim Mortimore (Season 2 Book 4, pub. October 2016).*

**Birthday:** Oct 31st, 1938.

Born 3 years after the events of *The Abominable Snowmen* (1935).

**Father:** Edward Travers (anthropologist), born 1896, was 39 in 1935, is 73 in 1969.

**Mother:** Caroline, born 1894 (hearsay). Nationality: unrevealed for now (possibly American).

### Notable Personal History

Anne doesn't know much about her mother. Anne's father Edward has never talked about her and is notoriously difficult to draw on the subject. During her early life Anne's assumption was that her mother died during childbirth and her father was devastated. Recently Anne has become increasingly interested in finding out what her mother was like. Her father is old, and looks like he might die soon, and she wants to know everything she can before that happens. In truth she's always wanted to know, but until now has been able to hold back from pressing her father. However since his recent brush with death (WoF), she has come to understand how late she has left things, how soon (and unexpectedly) she might lose the opportunity to know her mother, if her dad dies.

### Notable Professional History

To be a Scientific Advisor to a secret military organisation, Anne must be highly qualified and experienced in a great many fields, including some most scientists would deem errant nonsense. She must also have a wide range of interests. ("I'm interested in everything worthy of interest – and everything else to boot.") Anne is 30 (31 on Oct 31st 1969), and has been studying since her mid teens. Her formal training was initially sponsored privately by her father. Prejudice in the male dominated world of science in the 60s often made things difficult for them, and more than once put a wall up in Edward's own professional path. This just made Anne more determined to excel, which she has in spades, gaining qualifications and experience in many subjects, and in one or two cases advancing fields with original research of her own. (Which may or may not have been taken seriously/acknowledged by her male peers.)

### Socially

Anne is bright, humorous, forward looking, mostly optimistic, and socially adept ("I cut a ferocious rug. Ask me to dance at your peril."). However she does think deeply about almost everything (having experienced absolute proof of alien life before Man even landed on the Moon) and is at times given to mood swings, which she is always learning new techniques to control. She has expertise in many fields but her most notable skill is an almost uncanny ability to blend apparently unrelated facts in order to synthesize (often highly left-field) solutions. Life (notably professional life) has taught Anne that the wearing of social masks is often advantageous, but it has not yet made her bitter about this (which may change when she is much older). Between 1964 and 1968, Anne travelled extensively, learning everything she could about different cultures and other views of science and the world. A significant part of her experience took place at Berkeley, California, in 1967, where she embraced the hippy-physicist movement, discussed Buddhism and telepathy, smoked far too many bongos and tried to reach the bottom of the rabbit hole known as quantum mechanics. While at Berkeley she contributed significant thoughts to fellows who later wrote books such as, *The Tau of Physics*, *The Dancing Wu-Li Masters*, and *Space, Time and Beyond*. Great Britain seemed a much smaller place when Anne returned from her travels, older, wiser, somewhat amused, but also highly respectful of other world-views. Anne, always an original thinker with real courage in her convictions, has matured into a determined but pragmatic truth-seeker, primarily

interested in enriching the world via new discoveries (she joint-owns the rights on several patents for tools and processes (inc. Velcro, developed for NASA), and small incomes from these enable her to be somewhat independent of traditional 9-5 work). One might say Anne is dogged and relentless, but then one would only be seeing the tip of the iceberg one was about to crash headlong into. Even those who think they know her well are often surprised.

### Family

Anne loves her dad, but also finds him old-fashioned, frustrating, and annoying. She doesn't have contact with any grandparents or wider family though she does have an old wooden box full documents left to her in an overseas family member's will which she has not yet found the time (or courage) to open. Anne is becoming increasingly interested in the idea of a family of her own, a husband and children, and may well start one when she can figure out a way of integrating her personal and professional lives in a way she considers healthy and balanced. (Anne often laughs this off with a witty riff on the "This may be the Last Great Unanswered Question of Life," theme.)

### Last Word

Anne is the light which burns twice as bright. People fall in love with her. But Anne herself has never fallen in love with anything other than the truth. Anne genuinely (and mistakenly) thinks of herself as a WYSIWYG kinda gal (because she sees farther and deeper than most). Anne loves experimental classical music, obscure strategic table-top games, and picking out the perfect present for those she cares for. Anne cannot resist a puzzle – never realising that for those who love her (especially her father), she is the greatest puzzle of all.

### Quotes

In General:	"I'm interested in everything worthy of interest – and everything else to boot."
On Religion:	"Religion is a belief in absolute truth."
On Science:	"Science is that which defines a belief in absolute truth."
On Science vs. Religion:	"Since each proceeds from an absolute belief in an unproven theory, science and religion are arguably the same thing."
On dating:	"I cut a ferocious rug. Ask me to dance at your peril."
On finance:	"My bank manager (to date the only man I know who treats both men and women with with absolute objectivity based solely on their wealth) tells me my royalty cheque from NASA regarding the commercial applications of <i>Velcro</i> officially made me the richest poor person in Great Britain."
On drugs:	"If you think LSD messes with your head, try quantum mechanics. At least with LSD you know the trip will end <i>sometime</i> ."
Favourite quote:	"Bohr was inconsistent, unclear, wilfully obscure, and right. Einstein was consistent, clear, down-to-earth, and wrong." – <i>John Bell, physicist, 1928-1990.</i>

**Hobson (bio)****Born:** 1933**Age:** 37 in 1969**ALS's principle human antagonist during the series.**

Two years younger than ALS. Won't tell anyone his first name. Won't tell anyone why, either. Hobson has been deliberately kept out of the regular chain of command by government brass higher up even than Hamilton, who see him as their blunt instrument – the man they can never acknowledge or reward, but whom they want to be able to call on if Hamilton's more moderate solutions fail. Hobson may not *have* rank, but he'll always be able to *pull* it. He has a direct line to the brass but rarely needs to use it. The brass seldom fail to back him up, no matter how outrageous his actions, which of course makes him feared and hated by anyone trying to get their jobs done through the normal chain of command. During the events of *Fear of Light*, it is revealed (without proof and only to ALS) that Hobson was complicit in Colonel Pemberton's death (prior to WoF) and stole his monogrammed pistol. Hobson will retain the pistol, right up til his last confrontation with ALS (*Saturnalia*), when ALS has an opportunity to kill Hobson with it.

**Notable History**

Maternal uncle to Jo Grant [**Blood Heat**]. Met ALS at Sandhurst, in 1954, following ALS' national service, where H, ALS and Dougie formed a popular “holy triumvirate” until Hobson was lured away by more extreme elements of the military. Since then H and ALS have been on ever-diverging paths. Where ALS holds the view that diplomacy is a potent first response, Hobson prefers the kill-first-don't-bother-with-questions approach. Hobson is super-fit, *very* highly trained, thoroughly versed in use of many weapons, including those used by other cultures. A better fighter and a faster responder than ALS, in many ways Hobson is the perfect military animal. This said, Hobson has no ambitions to lead; he's not after glory: like ALS, all he wants is a safe world. However, unlike ALS, Hobson is prepared to kill first to get it. Where ALS is a liberal thinker, Hobson is a (human-first) racist. (In a supreme irony, Hobson believes the life of “even the poorest Indian beggar” is more important than that of any alien.) Hobson's lack of faith in the moderate response is the only thing keeping him out of the chain of command. But that's OK, because Hobson will always prefer life in the field, saving the world one alien corpse at a time, using whatever means he deems fit, and moonlighting for whichever government has the more agreeable policy or the most cash, whenever he feels it's appropriate, or whenever the Brits don't cut the mustard.

As of *Feralia* (book 8 – set October 1969) Hobson is revealed to be working with the US, apparently aligned with a US covert intelligence unit. His presence and actions indicate that at least part of the British Intelligence service is on the US payroll, either openly or covertly. Anything is possible for Hobson's future. In *Bacchanalia* (book 14), Hobson temporarily replaces ALS as commander of HAVOC, and nearly causes an interstellar war. Following this Hobson is court-martialed for these events, and for the murder of Colonel Pemberton and Sally Wright, before escaping custody prior to summary execution. Following this, Hobson goes dark, becoming a freelance foreign (ie: alien) “problem solver,” working for the highest bidder, often coming into conflict with ALS (now reinstated as head of HAVOC) because of his more extreme responses.

During his story arc, Hobson will become more obsessed with the things that he perceives as being wrong with the world (notably anything moderate) and this will ultimately lead to his viewing himself as one of the *Cimmerii* – mythical warriors believed in Greek mythology to inhabit a Land of Perpetual Darkness (which of course is what Hobson has always really considered the normal world to be). Over the years, Hobson's thoughts often turn to ALS, becoming increasingly bitter.

**Hobson and the US Intelligence Community**

Prior to events in WoF, Colonel Pemberton was part of British Intelligence (his rank was kept frozen deliberately to keep him more operational in the field, but he was due to be promoted up the



chain at the time of WoF). Hobson killed him while acting as a double agent for the US intelligence community. The US wanted an agent on the inside of British Intelligence but Pemberton was old-school – he would not play ball. Removing him should have been the perfect way to position a more malleable asset in his place. This goes wrong because of the events of WoF, which leave ALS as Pemberton's replacement. Pemberton was ALS' old commanding officer in Korea, and ALS is even *more* intractable than Pemberton.

During *Feralia*, ALS will discover that, during Korea, the US deployment at Inchon and their push across the Imjin River was specifically intended to provoke an over-reaction from the Chinese (thus turning them into the political enemy they become in the Dr Who Universe) which would be a sufficient excuse for the US to escalate military programs without being seen as aggressors. This discovery will cross-pollinate with Hobson revealing to the US Intelligence Community that HAVOC exists, thus leading to the US decision to use Hobson to try to get a man on the inside of HAVOC – which will turn out to be Evans. Evans (already a very minor asset for Hobson since *Fear of Light*) will be fully recruited as a spy within HAVOC in *Feralia*.

NB: In the “real world” timeline Korea was the first instance of action by the United Nations, and is now widely considered unsuccessful because it could not resolve the situation except through extensive military action, and even then not actually resolve it at all. (Since no peace agreement has ever been signed, both N and S Korea are still *technically* at war.) In the HAVOC timeline all this remains the same, with the addition that the US government precipitated the Chinese involvement in Korea deliberately to undermine the fledgeling UN because they saw in it the potential to be a more powerful player on the world stage than the US. Essentially, the US have cleverly manipulated world events so that the Chinese are the enemy – and the US has the perfect excuse to escalate its military programs without being seen as aggressors.

### **Hobson and HAVOC**

During *Feralia* ALS will discover that General Hamilton was only one of three top brass who were responsible for forming HAVOC – Hamilton was the prime mover; the others didn't really take his ideas seriously. However, now he's been proven right, there is much thought being given to whether ALS should be replaced by Hobson – or that Hobson should be groomed for the slot if ALS should be killed in the line of duty. (Hobson (to ALS): “Right now Hamilton has your back. But what if he were out of the frame?”) ALS realises that Hobson is already treading the path of ultimate expediency. And he already knows (though he can't prove it) that Hobson was complicit in the death of Col. Pemberton, ALS's old commanding officer from the Korean War, ( *Fear of Light* ).

### **Hobson and ALS**

Hobson believes that he and ALS share many points of commonality. This is partially conceit, partially an attempt to play games with ALS. ALS is mostly too grounded to fall for Hobson's line. But there's still a tiny part of his mind which *knows* that every thing Hobson says could easily be true. In fact Hobson is smart enough to recognise in ALS something that even the brass don't see – the tiny seed of darkness which, in the *Inferno* timeline, led ALS to become the ruthless, homicidal Brigade Leader, a man far worse than Hobson because he wasn't, in the death, so smart. In later stories Hobson will develop this line of manipulation into a serious desire to “free ALS from his political shackles” and “help him realise his true potential.” By the time of their ultimate confrontation, Hobson's choices have essentially made him a highly capable psychopath who eventually attempts to manipulate ALS by placing him in a situation where ALS will have no choice but to kill Hobson (so fulfilling Hobson's idea of ALS's destiny.) ALS is too smart for this, of course, and Hobson fails. ALS leaves Hobson alive. There is no heroic redemption for Hobson who, faced with life imprisonment (during which he will die from a terminal illness of alien origin contracted during the series) shoots himself. ALS is gutted, because, of course, they started out as friends, even if they haven't been that for a very long time. By not killing Hobson, ALS is affected in some way (exposed to something, radiation or some alien virus maybe?) which later results in (or

otherwise contributes to the story of) his death, in 2014.

**Last Contact**

ALS's last contact with Hobson (*Bacchanalia*) is to receive Evans' old tobacco tin containing a scrap of web which holds the memories of ALS's fiancée, including one memory proving she was complicit in a lie of devastating importance to ALS. It's Hobson's last attempt at manipulation of ALS, from beyond the grave. ALS keeps the tin for a long time, wondering if he's strong enough to witness Hobson's final truth. Eventually he decides he's strong enough *not* to look. He burns the tin unopened.